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RURAL AREAS  
DEVELOPMENT

# NEWSLETTER

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## COMMUNITIES OF TOMORROW POLICY STATEMENT\*

It is a problem of the 20th Century throughout the world: "For too many years too many people have crowded themselves into central cities." But if we are to solve the problem in the United States -- if we are to safeguard the quality of life in the year 2000 and beyond -- we must develop a national policy of economic growth and its distribution now.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture hopefully planted the seeds of such a national policy in a recently released policy statement entitled "Communities of Tomorrow -- Agriculture/2000." This policy statement is an illustrated, 31 page booklet, which points up problems of population and opportunity imbalance and explores actions which could create an orderly and desirable movement of people pursuing new and better opportunities across the nation.

Need for a national policy is illustrated by this ominous observation: Today 70 percent of the U.S. population lives on less than two percent of the land, and another 100 million Americans will likely add to this 140 million population concentration on our urban real estate by the turn of the century.

The Communities of Tomorrow policy statement is as concerned with the emotional and social maladjustment wrought among people and societies by overcrowding as it is with the economic damage that it causes. The policy statement suggests a "rural alternative" to unlimited urban expansion -- an alternative that will take burgeoning population pressures off the cities as they rebuild for the 21st Century -- a policy that will provide for a massive development of land resources and country living space.

What needs to be done is highlighted in the sections on Planning, Farming and Ranching, Business and Industry, Community Facilities, Elimination of Poverty, Education and Job Training, Housing, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Beauty, Natural Resource Conservation and Development, Health and Welfare, Food, and Transportation.

What is being done -- the beginning, ongoing programs -- are included in the same sections so that the reader gets a balanced view of where we are with respect to what direction a national policy might take us.

\* Single copies of the policy statement, "Communities of Tomorrow -- Agriculture/2000," are available free from: Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

## Secretary Moves To Implement Policy Statement Provisions

Secretary Freeman acted quickly to implement policy recommendations in the Communities of Tomorrow publication.

One of his first actions was to order nationwide small farmer meetings to find out from small farmers what kind of programs they need "to stay on the land -- to keep economic pressures from forcing them into the cities."

The meetings were held in December and January. Recommendations coming out of these meetings are currently being evaluated. They are expected to guide the development of a comprehensive package of programs and USDA administrative actions that will help small farmers raise their income and continue to farm if that is what they wish to do.

The small farmer proposals are designed to meet three recommendations in the policy booklet:

- \* To work with low-income farmers to increase their farm incomes.
- \* To help find farms for people who want to farm and who have farm skills or a farm background.
- \* To provide the financial and technical help farmers need to become firmly established on the land and to adjust their farming operations.

## SYMPOSIUM ON COMMUNITIES OF TOMORROW -- NATIONAL GROWTH AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

National leaders directed attention to the space/people problem at a 2-day December symposium held in Washington, D.C.

Noted educators, land planners, transportation experts, builders, community development specialists, economists, bankers, labor leaders, civil rights spokesmen, industrialists, farm organization leaders, churchmen and local and State Government officials discussed the population drain from country to city; its impact on man and the national economy; man's future living space needs; and how life can be improved in both small towns and large population centers.

Co-sponsors of the symposium were six Cabinet members: Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, Secretary of Commerce Alexander B. Trowbridge, Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare John W. Gardner, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Robert C. Weaver, and Secretary of Transportation Alan S. Boyd.

## Press Reaction to the Symposium Was Widespread

The New York Times editorialized: "Until Congress and the public recognize the true shape and inter-relatedness of the nation's rural and urban problems, no major progress is possible. The Symposium was useful in speeding up that essential recognition."

The Christian Science Monitor noted: "The persistent, continuing flight from the countryside to crowded cities is perilous to the quality of American life...The conclusions of the Washington conference should receive nationwide attention, indeed worldwide notice."



The Chicago Sun-Times said: "Answers must be found. Americans must be allowed to live where they can be productive and happy. America cannot in good conscience allow displaced persons to be piled up in cities, as though cities were storage bins for surplus people."

Substantial press interest was shown by other leading papers and periodicals some of which reflected the wide variety of opinion frankly expressed during the conference.

#### MOVEMENT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION HAS STARTED

In a year-end statement, Secretary Freeman said a substantial slowdown in the migration pattern from small town to large urban areas has already begun.

Secretary Freeman cited studies which show:

- \* In the first half of the 1960's, the population growth rate in nonmetropolitan counties more than doubled their 1950-1960 rate, while the growth rate in metropolitan counties dropped. The metropolitan growth rate, however, still remained more than half a percent larger than the nonmetropolitan rate.
- \* From 1962 to 1966, new jobs in the countryside and small cities grew at a rate of about 4 percent a year -- double the countryside-small city growth rate of the fifties, higher than the national average, and higher than the growth rate in metropolitan areas.

"What this means is that while metropolitan areas are still growing faster than nonmetropolitan areas -- at least population wise -- the gap is narrowing," the Secretary said.

"We are on our way to making the living space of the countryside as economically attractive as it already is in terms of communities built to human scale, in terms of natural beauty, a clean environment, and unharried living."

The Secretary credited the Department of Agriculture's increased community development activity with helping local leaders successfully carry out community development programs in nonimpacted areas.

#### USDA INDUSTRIAL PLANT LOCATION CENTER

USDA is opening an Industrial Plant Location Center in Washington, D.C., to help businessmen plan new facilities in rural areas.

The Rural Community Development Service (RCDS), which is setting up the Center says it will save industry representatives time by giving them an opportunity to review in one place, and on a confidential basis, many potential locations for new plants. Through the Center arrangements may also be made for interested businessmen to make personal contacts with State and local industrial development agencies.

The Center will have files giving information about rural communities, including detailed information about financing plans, training programs, taxes, labor availability, transportation, and utilities as provided by State and local development groups.

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Communities wanting to be included in this file may submit prepared industrial development material to the Rural Industrialization Program, Rural Community Development Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The material submitted should contain as complete information as can be gathered, including overall Economic Development Programs, brochures, area surveys and any other information that may be available.

About 17,000 copies of a Department brochure are scheduled to be mailed to businessmen telling about the Center, which will open in March.

#### RURAL POVERTY REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

A 160 page report by the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty charts a course to wipe out rural poverty. Major emphasis is on what needs to be done to solve the problems of poor rural people and what needs to be done to improve the lot of impoverished small communities.

Entitled "The People Left Behind," it relates the plight of 14 million poor rural Americans left behind amid a generally prosperous society. Critical areas of nutrition, housing, health, education, sanitation and income are explored and recommendations given for solutions.

Copies are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Price \$1.00).